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SUMMARY ACCOUNT
OF THE
RISE AND PROGRESS
OF THE
SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND
FOR PROPAGATING
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

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SHEWING

The IMPORTANCE of the INSTITUTION ;

The BENEFITS arising from it ;

The chief OBJECTS of the ATTENTION of the DIRECTORS ;

And the AID necessary to enable them to carry on their
beneficent DESIGNS.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED for the SOCIETY.

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SUMMARY ACCOUNT, &c.

THE unhappy condition of many of the inhabitants of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, is little known to those who are blessed with every mean of religious instruction, and with the comforts of a more civilized life. A short state of the circumstances of those parts of the country, with a summary account of the designs and proceedings of the Society, will be of use to shew the importance of its institution, the benefits arising from it, and the aid which is still necessary to enable the Managers to carry on their beneficent purposes.

In the Highlands the poor people labour under disadvantages peculiar to themselves, arising chiefly from the nature of their country, and of their language. The parishes there are in general not only of great extent

tent, many of them being from twenty to thirty computed miles in length, but so intersected with lakes, arms of the sea, rapid rivers, or almost impassable mountains, that there is not a third part of the people who can receive any benefit from the parochial churches or schools; at the same time, the severity of the climate, and the barrenness of the soil, by obstructing internal improvements, contribute to fetter the inhabitants in their native rude and uncultivated state.

In the low country of Scotland, even the poorest of the people have not only access to their parish churches and schools, but they are in general provided with bibles, catechisms, and books on practical religion, by reading which they have it much in their power to improve themselves. In the Highlands, the greatest part of the inhabitants is, in a manner, debarred from all these advantages. Though taught to read, which many of them are not, yet having few, and, until of late, no books in their own language, they either remain uninstructed, or, perverted by Romish priests, embrace the errors of the Popish superstition.

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That this general description is not exaggerated will appear from the following state of a few parishes in the Highlands, taken not from a vague report, but from particular enquiry, and facts well ascertained.

The parish of *South Uist* consists of the Islands of South Uist, Benbecula, and Eriska. It is 30 miles long, and 5 miles in breadth, and contains about 2600 souls, of whom 2300 are Papists. There are two Popish priests and a mass-house in it.

The parish of *Barra* consists of the Island of Barra, which is 5 miles long and 2 broad, and of six other small Islands, and contains about 1300 souls, of whom 1250 are Papists. In the time of Charles I. all were Protestants; but after the restoration, this and the following parish being united, and the then minister residing always in the latter, Popish priests came into the former, and perverted almost the whole inhabitants.

The parish of *Harris* consists of the Island of Harris, and seven other small islands. It is 24 miles long, and 6 broad, and contains about 2000 souls, all Protestants.

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The parish of *Boleskine* is 20 miles long and 4 broad, and contains about 1600 catechisable persons, of whom 400 are Papists, who are increasing in number.

The parish of *Urquhart* is about 18 miles long, and 12 broad. It contains about 2000 souls, of whom about 130 or 140, who inhabit Glenmoriston, are Papists. A Popish priest resides frequently in this glen.

The parish of *Kilmallie* is 35 miles long, and 25 broad, and contains about 4000 souls, of whom 35 are Papists. Fort William is in this parish.

The parish of *Ardnamurchan* comprehends the five following countries, viz. Ardnamurchan, properly so called, which is 14 miles long, and 4 broad, and contains 1200 souls, all Protestants; Sunart, which is 14 miles long and 5 broad, contains 447 souls, of whom 4 are Papists; Moydart, which is 16 miles long, and from 5 to 7 broad, contains 828 souls, of whom 824 are Papists; South Morar, which is 14 miles long, and from 2 to 3 broad, contains 281 souls, of whom there is only *one* Protestant. The whole
number

number of souls in this parish is 3816, of whom 1956 are Papists. A Popish priest resides constantly in Arasaig, where a mass-house was built about ten years ago; another priest resides constantly in Moydart, and a third in South Morar †.

The parish of *Lefmore*, to which Appin is now united, is about 41 miles long, and 17 broad, and contains about 3000 souls.

The parish of *Glenmuick* lies on the south side of the river Dee, and is 10 miles long. To it are now united the parishes of Tullich and Glengarden, which lie on the north side of that river, and are 13 miles long, and altogether at an average 8 miles broad. They contain about 2200 souls, of whom about 337 are Papists.

The parish of *Crathie*, to which Braemarr is now united, is 17 miles long, and about 6 and a half broad, the river Dee running through the middle, and contains 2253 souls, of whom 337 are Papists.

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† The account here given of the parishes in the Highlands was taken about nine years ago.

The parish of *Inveraven* is 10 miles long, and from 2 to 3 broad, and contains 1200 souls. At Scallan, in the braes of Glenlivet, in this parish, is a Popish College or Seminary, the only one in Scotland; the number of students who attend it is in general from 8 to 12; most of them are sons to gentlemen in the neighbourhood, and some of them become Priests without going abroad. At present there are 12 students at this College. About a century ago, the number of Papists in Glenlivet was so small and inconsiderable, that they had no fixed Priest, but were obliged to send to Gardenfide, 9 or 10 miles distant, for one to visit their sick, and baptize their children. Since the erection of this College, which was about 70 or 80 years ago, Popery has made such a rapid progress, that according to the most authentic accounts, there are at present no fewer than 1520 Papists in this and the neighbouring parish of Kirkmichael. In the former, they have increased 200 since the year 1750, and in the latter 77 since the 1755. The situation of this College is peculiarly calculated for promoting the interests of Popery, being
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in the center of seven parishes, at the distance of 7 miles from each church, except that of Kirkmichael, from which it is 4 miles distant, and surrounded with a ridge of hills, whereby it is separated from all the neighbouring countries. Beside a Priest or Bishop, who resides constantly at this college, there are generally three and often six Priests, who officiate in the several mass-houses of both parishes.

The parish of *Glenelg* comprehends the countries of *Glenelg*, *Knoidart*, and *North Morar*. *Glenelg* is 6 miles long from north to south, and the glens, which lie from east to west, are 4 miles long. *Knoidart*, which is separated from *Glenelg* by an arm of the sea called *Lochurn*, is 10 miles long from east to west, and 5 miles broad from south to north. *North Morar*, which is separated from *Knoidart* by an arm of the sea called *Lochnevis*, is 10 miles long from east to west, and from 2 to 3 miles broad from north to south. This computation includes only the inhabited parts of the parish, beyond which, the hills called the *utter bills* extend many miles towards *Glengary* and *Lochaber*;

Lochaber; to these hills the inhabitants go with their cattle in summer. In this parish are 2570 souls, of whom 1340 are Papists: A Popish Priest resides constantly at Knoisdart, and officiates in a mass-house at Invergeferan, on the side of Lochurn. About 4 or 5 years ago, a Popish lady did, by her last will, bequeath a considerable sum of money for the purpose of erecting a Popish school or academy at North Morar: several other Papists having also contributed for this purpose, an academy was accordingly erected, and still subsists, at which a Priest regularly officiates: Last year there were 16 students, many of whom were sons to gentlemen in that country.

There is not a year passes, in which the Society are not well informed of the progress of Popery in different parts of the Highlands. Very lately it has been certified to them, that in the parish of Lochalsh, and that neighbourhood, there are 150 persons, who within these five years have been perverted by Popish Priests. At Portsoy a Popish Chapel has been lately built, and in several parishes throng schools are publicly taught

taught by masters who are of the Popish religion. Besides these instances, if it were necessary, we might point out many other parishes in the Highlands and Islands where the poor people are no less unhappily circumstanced.

But dismal as their condition may appear to be, yet that soul remains in a state no less darkened which has never been illuminated by divine truth, and cold as their climate is, that heart is still colder which has never been warmed with love to God or benevolence to mankind.

Our fathers discovered greater zeal than appears in the age in which we live. To christianize a rude people, where not only the almost inaccessible nature of the country, but the manners and language of the people, seemed to form insurmountable opposition, was a bold attempt. But they were not discouraged.

In the year 1701, a few private gentlemen of the city of Edinburgh, who had formed themselves into a Society for the reformation of manners, felt for the condition of
their

their unhappy countrymen. To have planted a greater number of churches, in these widely extended parishes, instead of uniting two parishes, would have been attended with the happiest consequences. But this was an object beyond their power. To establish schools, in those parts of the country which were remote from parish churches and schools, appeared to them to be the most effectual means which they could use to form the minds of the rising generation, and rescue them from that state of ignorance and barbarism in which their forefathers had lived. A subscription was opened to defray the necessary expence; when they had obtained contributions to the amount of 1000*l.* her Majesty Queen Ann was graciously pleased to encourage this design by her royal proclamation, and granting letters patent under the great seal of Scotland, for erecting certain of the subscribers into a corporation.

At the first meeting of the Society, 1709, a scheme was formed and approved. The general object was to erect and maintain schools in such parts of the Highlands and Islands

Islands of Scotland as should be thought to need them most; in which schools Papists, as well as Protestants, of every denomination, should be taught by fit and well qualified schoolmasters appointed by the Society.

At this time a number of stations, where schools were much wanted, were pointed out; but the small revenue of the Society did not enable them to establish more than five schools in all.

If they had been allowed to encroach on their capital, by giving salaries to a greater number of masters than the interest of it could pay, their stock must have soon dwindled away, and the beneficent purposes of the Society would have been of short duration. But, by steadily adhering to the general rule of adding every legacy and subscription to their capital, and laying out no more than the interest, after paying the necessary expence of management, they have accumulated a fund which enables them to be of very general service, though, they are sorry to say, it is still inadequate to the great objects they have in view. They are often
reluctantly

reluctantly obliged to refuse petitions for schools from many parts of the Highlands where they are much wanted, and where they have reason to believe they would be of the most essential service.

The attention of the Directors to the interests of the Society appears from the gradual increase of their funds, and from the number of schools maintained by them. A short view of this at successive periods, from the commencement of the Society to this date, may be acceptable to the public.

<i>Anno</i> 1713, The Society		
maintained	12 Schools	
1715, Their capital in-		
creased to	-	L. 6,177
On which they main-		
tained	25 Schools	
1719, Their capital		
stock	-	8,168
On which they main-		
tained	48 Schools	
1727, Their capital	-	9,131
On which they main-		
tained	78 Schools	

At

At which were taught

2757 Scholars.

1732, Their capital - L. 13,318

On which they main-

tained - 109 Schools

1742, Their capital - 19,287

On which they main-

tained 128 Schools

1753, Their capital - 24,308

On which they main-

tained 152 Schools

1758, Their capital - 28,413

On which they main-

tained - 176 Schools

At which were taught

6409 Scholars.

1781, The funds of the

Society, on the 1st and

2d patent, amount to

about - - 34,000

On which they main-

tain about 180 Schools

And of boys and girls

educate about 7000.

It must afford real pleasure to every pious

mind to be informed, that a few private

persons

At

persons have, by the blessing of God, raised this charitable institution from a small beginning to be so extensively useful; that so many of our fellow creatures, the far greater part of whom must have remained in a state of ignorance, are favoured with the means of knowledge, conducive to their present, and essential to their eternal welfare. Happy are they whom God hath blessed with the power of doing good! who employ it in promoting the gracious designs of his providence, or who, though they cannot be personally active, yet, by contributing out of their abundance, can afford to others the means of making even "The desert to sing for joy, and the name of their Saviour great from the rising to the setting Sun."

Though the numbers now educated at the expence of the Society are very considerable, yet charitable aid is still required. The Directors have evidence to convince them, that in the Highlands there are yet as great a number destitute of the means of instruction, as are at present taught at their schools.

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Some additional reasons may be offered to show why the friends of religion are more particularly called upon at this period to support the designs of the Society.

Until of late there has been always some prospect of obtaining aid from public funds. Formerly the ablest statesmen thought the civilizing of the Highlands an object of national importance. By an act of George I. soon after the rebellion 1715, it is enacted, " That a sum not exceeding L. 20,000 arising out of the money from the sale of the forfeited estates, shall be appropriated and applied towards the making a capital stock for a yearly interest or income, towards erecting and maintaining schools in the Highlands of Scotland, &c." No words can be more explicit; yet we have not heard that a shilling of the above sum has ever been applied to the important object pointed out.

By an act of George II. *anno* 1752, it is enacted, " That the clear rents and produce of the estates annexed to the Crown, viz. the far greatest part of the estates in Scotland,

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land,

‘ land, forfeited on account of the rebellion
 ‘ 1745, shall be applied for the purposes of
 ‘ civilizing the inhabitants on such estates,
 ‘ and other parts of the Highlands and
 ‘ Islands of Scotland, the promoting the
 ‘ *Protestant* religion, good government, in-
 ‘ dustry and manufactures, and the princi-
 ‘ ples of duty and loyalty to his Majesty, his
 ‘ heirs and successors, and *to no other use or*
 ‘ *purpose whatever.*” Trustees are also ap-
 pointed by this act, who are further im-
 powered, “ That, when they shall judge
 ‘ the parishes to be of too large an extent to
 ‘ be under the charge of one minister, to
 ‘ divide such parishes into two or more, to
 ‘ prescribe the bounds of such new erected
 ‘ parishes, and grant competent provision
 ‘ to the minister of such parishes, to be paid
 ‘ out of the present maintenance for the mi-
 ‘ nister of the old parish, and the remainder
 ‘ out of said estates.”

After this act passed, it could scarcely be
 doubted that something effectual in pur-
 suance of it would have been done. No
 steps, however, were taken to forward the de-
 sign

sign until the year 1761, when the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland applied to his Majesty, representing the state of the Highlands, and appointed a Committee to correspond with the Board of Annexed Estates, to whom the administration of the money arising from them was intrusted.

The Committee of Assembly, after due inquiry, did report, and pointed out some of those stations in the Highlands where new erections were most necessary. In consequence of this, and directions from the Lords of the Treasury, the Trustees, at one time, actually set apart the sum of L 420 to build a church and manse in the parish of Ardnamurchan: but no church or manse has been yet built, nor any thing effectual done by this Board. After repeated applications, the Committee of Assembly was informed, in the month of May last, that the Trustees could proceed no farther without orders from the Board of Treasury. Now, we are sorry to observe, that we have not the smallest prospect of obtaining aid from that quarter.

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The Trustees on the Annexed Estates are a respectable body of men, and, it is to be presumed, that they have good reasons for their procedure which they may not think proper to disclose; but such are the facts; we only regret that so large a fund, once destined by the legislature for the improvement of the Highlands and Islands, should never have been, nor is likely to be applied to the first, and, we think, to the most important object of its destination.

But though we regret the failure of public aid, this is no reason for our despairing of doing good; it is rather an additional incentive to private beneficence; much has been done, and, it is to be hoped, that much more will be done in this way: the object is a noble one, worthy of a heart fraught with love to God, and benevolence to mankind.

There is at present another circumstance which renders the attention of the friends of true religion yet more necessary, and that is, the progress of Popery, particularly in those parts of the Highlands where the people have no means of religious instruction. By
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some this has been lightly treated as an imaginary evil. The information, however, received by the Society from the best authority, leaves no room to doubt, that the evil, though apparently small, is real; and, if some means are not employed to prevent its progress, may, in the course of a few years, become truly alarming. They therefore think it their duty to lay before the friends of the Protestant faith the following state, containing the information they have received, and the measures which, to them, appear most prudent and necessary to be pursued.

It is well known that it has been long a favourite object of the Church of Rome to reduce the British nation to that spiritual bondage, under which it had been held in former ages. To accomplish this design, several daring and open attempts have been made, which, more than once, were nearly successful. Though, by the interposition of Providence, these have been frustrated, yet the zealots of Popery have the same object still in view, to obtain which every mean is used which religious zeal or human artifice

fice can invent. The methods now chiefly employed are secret, and seemingly slow, yet, if not counteracted, may in the end prove the most effectual.

To make proselytes to the Popish faith is held forth by their Church as the most meritorious service they can do, either to God or man: though in this country they cannot openly propagate the tenets of their superstition, yet, it is well known, that priests and missionaries are daily employed in almost every part of the kingdom.

To prevent an alarm, their success is industriously concealed; but we have reason to believe it has been considerable, particularly with young, weak, or illiterate people.—If a priest perverts one member of a family, he seldom fails of bringing over the rest to his opinions; for young proselytes, commonly more zealous than others, are at the utmost pains to persuade their relations and friends to agree with them in their new way of thinking.

These missionaries, assiduous by their personal labours, are not less attentive to put
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into the hands of their people, books artfully calculated, not only to rivet them in their own principles, but to excite an abhorrence in their minds of any other opinions: (such books they find particularly useful for perverting those upon whom they have not an opportunity of working by discourse or private conversation.) Numbers of them are either privately sold at a low price, or distributed gratis to their young profelytes, or to such as they have the hope of gaining over to their tenets.

As we have already observed, that in the Highlands of Scotland, where the people are deprived of almost every means of instruction, the missionaries hope for the greatest success, so in those remote places they have not only instituted seminaries of learning, and appointed priests to different stations, but they have been at pains to get their catechisms and other books translated into the Gaelic language. This is openly done, and we are well informed that several thousands of these publications have been distributed.

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Some of their books, which have fallen into the hands of the Members of the Society, are written with great address, in support of the doctrines of Popery, and with a view of exposing what they call the heresies of the Protestant churches ; one in particular they have lately seen, entitled, *The sincere Christian instructed.*

This is a translation from a very artful French performance, in which all the tenets of the Church of Rome are not only laid down as infallible truths, but are defended by plausible arguments, and by texts of scripture, though in general grossly misapplied. Where these fail, the saying of a pretended saint, the decrees of a corrupted council, or the admonitions of a bigotted bishop, are held forth as of equal authority. It is difficult to conceive any book better calculated to make an impression on an unlearned, weak, or superstitious mind than this is. It spreads out, on one hand, the terrors of death, purgatory, and hell-fire, to all those who are not in the bosom of the church, and on the other, the infallible efficacy of its sacraments as the only possible way to salvation.

tion. It then thunders out against the Protestants all the anathemas denounced by the Apostles against the first apostates from Christianity. That they may be in no danger of losing those whom they have perverted, it strictly prohibits as a damnable sin their holding any religious converse with heretics, their attending their places of worship, or reading their books, which they reckon no less sinful. It is added, that this is particularly prohibited in Scotland, because their appearing in a conventicle, as they call our churches, is thought to be equivalent to a denial of their own religion.

Beside the above-mentioned book, the Popish Priests in Edinburgh have been lately circulating among serving maids and others, whom they have the hope of making proselytes, a duodecimo volume entitled, *The Protestant's Trial in contraverted Points of Faith by the Written Word*, in which it is attempted to expose by texts from scripture what they call the heresies of the Protestants, and to establish by that authority all their own peculiar tenets. It seems to be written by way of answer to a small pamphlet published in

1781, by the Bishop of Chester, for the use of his diocese, entitled *a Brief Confutation of the Errors of the Church of Rome*. In this publication, his Lordship directs his people, in all matters of faith, to apply to the *written word*, as the highest authority, and to reject the assumed infallibility of any church. Here they pretend to try Protestants by this *written word*. But they begin with one great advantage on their side, namely, by endeavouring to convince their readers from scripture, that they are not judges of its meaning, which they must implicitly receive from the church, or from their priests. Availing themselves of this, they cull out passages of scripture, and disconnecting them from their natural meaning, grossly misapply in support of their errors. Though such a book can make no impression on any person of real knowledge, yet it is very artfully calculated to impose on and mislead the weak and unstable.

By such artifices they have not only deceived many, but they put it beyond the reach of the most diligent pastors to reclaim those whom they have perverted. It is evident,

evident, therefore, that if we do not prevent the spreading influence of Popery, we can entertain but little hope of converting its votaries. The Priests, conscious of the weakness of their arguments, decline fair reasoning, and chuse rather to trust to the insidious method of stealing in upon private families, where they too often succeed in misleading the ignorant and unwary: And lest their weak and unfair reasoning should be detected, the persons to whom they give or lend their books, are enjoined to conceal them from Protestants, whose zeal might prompt, or whose knowledge might enable them to expose their fallacy.

It has been confidently said, that there is no danger of the progress of Popery in a free country, where the means of acquiring liberal knowledge are so common as they are now in Britain. Such hasty affirmations arise from the ignorance of facts, and of human nature.

It is not said that Popery is making an open or a rapid progress; but from the state of many parishes in the Highlands, some of which

which have been particularly mentioned, it appears to have been very considerable since the beginning of this century ; and, from the accounts which we have lately received from good authority, it is daily increasing. As Popish priests and missionaries are, in general, anxiously careful to conceal or disguise their characters, we cannot ascertain the number employed in Scotland ; but it is considerable ; many of them are known, and might easily be pointed out. Neither can we pretend to state the precise number perverted by them within any limited time ; but, from the best accounts we have received, it is greater than is commonly supposed. In a printed card, which was lately circulated through London by a Popish priest, soliciting good Catholics to contribute money to defray the expence of printing the Douay Catechism, it is stated, that above ten thousand of their brethren in the Highlands had never had a book printed in their own language. If they continue to encrease for many years to come in the same proportion that they have done for some years past, it is thought the most secure will find reason
to

to be alarmed : The advocates for an unlimited toleration may have cause to regret the encouragement they have given to a religion which devotes them to perdition.

Of those who are educated in Popery, and ignorant of the grounds of the Protestant faith, we believe that there are many thousands truly pious and sincere, who love God and mankind, and who, though misled by the arts of priestcraft in many opinions, yet will be found the objects of divine mercy. The best are, in many instances, liable to error. We cannot, like the propagators of what they call the Catholic faith, consign to everlasting misery all who differ from us in opinion, or are not of our own communion.

But while we make these concessions, it is incumbent on us to give our testimony against a superstition which is in many instances contrary to the genuine spirit of Christianity, and dangerous to the interests of civil society.

We solemnly revere the holy sacrament of the supper, and believe that, by a spiritual participation,

participation, grace and life are imparted to believers. But we reject the adoration of the elements as idolatrous, and their doctrine of transubstantiation as childish and absurd. We acknowledge the evil of sin, and that our transgressions have exposed us to divine wrath. But we cannot believe that our corporal punishment can ever atone for them. We renounce their doctrine of penance as derogatory from the merits of Christ, and as tending to lead men away from that contrition of spirit, and from that change of heart and life which true religion inculcates. We acknowledge the necessity of that faith which purifieth the heart, but can nowhere see enjoined in Scripture that implicit faith by which their Church requires of its votaries to receive the traditions of men as of equal authority with the commandments of God. We respect the memory of those martyrs to the truth who sealed their testimony with their blood; but we can never believe that they are exalted to be objects of worship, or that, in conjunction with Christ, they are appointed to be intercessors for their brethren on earth. We are
 assured

assured in Scripture that if we confess our sins, and sincerely forsake them, God, thro' Christ, is gracious and merciful to forgive them; but we renounce the impious doctrine, that it is left in the power of any man, however high his station, or sacred his office, to grant, on any consideration, an indulgence in a known sin, or a dispensation for the neglect of a commanded duty. We believe that, in every nation and church, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness shall, through the merits of his Saviour, be accepted of his Creator; but we have the best reason to fear, that the tenets of Popery have led, and will continue to lead many from the only way of salvation into a fatal delusion of trusting in lying vanities.

We farther believe, that while Popery is thus hurtful to the spiritual and eternal interests of mankind, it is not less detrimental to the interests of civil society; that it inculcates a narrow, a bigotted, and intolerant spirit, which is subversive of that charity which is the bond of peace; that, under the sanction of religion, it persuades men to dispense with the most solemn obligations, and

to

to account it serving God, when, relentless, they torture and embrue their hands in the blood of their fellow-creatures whose religious sentiments are different from their own.

It is, at the same time, baneful to industry, particularly in the Highlands of Scotland, and a heavy tax on a people already very poor.

These effects of Popery may not appear in those countries where there is a large proportion of Protestants, or where the minds of men are enlightened by science; yet they are evidently seen in these countries where almost the whole knowledge of the people consists in their attachment to absurd superstitions. In Portugal, in Spain, in Italy, and in those parts of Ireland, and the Highlands of Scotland, where Popery prevails, the common people are more destitute of industry, and of the common arts of life, than in any other part of Europe.

This is more fully shown in the following account given us by a learned and worthy clergyman, who has an opportunity of
knowing

knowing the effects of Popery in those parts which are contiguous to his place of residence.

“ I take it for granted that the prosperity of an estate is, in a great measure, derived from the industry of the inhabitants living upon it. Had the kingdoms of Spain or Portugal been possessed a century ago by Britons or Dutch, they would have made a quite different figure in the commercial system of Europe, and would have been much happier at home than the present Spaniards or Portuguese. To speak of smaller things, had the Islands of South Uist and Barra been peopled from North Uist and Harris, and the small Popish Isles by the Protestants of Skye, the proprietors would have been the better for it, and the people would have had greater plenty than they now enjoy. It would have been the same on the continent of Scotland where Popery now prevails. Were Morar, Arasaig, Moirdart, Knoidart, Glenmoriston, and Strathglass, peopled by the Protestants of Argyle and Inverness shires, the difference of religion would not appear so visibly in their

' faces and on their backs. The Catholics in
 ' those countries are so encumbered with fast
 ' and feast days as to give them a bias to in-
 ' dolence, and to a frequent neglect of their
 ' work in every season of the year, where, in
 ' an uncertain, variable climate, the closest
 ' attention to tillage, to the cutting down
 ' and taking in of the harvest, is absolutely
 ' necessary: when every motion of the black
 ' cattle, the staple of these countries, roving
 ' over commons, ought to be carefully
 ' watched,—the people are playing their
 ' gambols in honour of some one saint or
 ' other; and thus the natural indolence of
 ' the pastoral life is rivetted down by reli-
 ' gion.

" I believe it is true that they worship
 ' saints who have been long since expun-
 ' ged from the Romish Kalendar; and I am
 ' sure St Barr is not worshipped any where
 ' on the face of the globe but in the Island
 ' of Barra; nor is St Michael's day so emi-
 ' nently celebrated with a general cavalcade
 ' as in South Uist, where the people, after
 ' eating St Michael's cake, baked with milk
 ' and the yoke of eggs, ride fun-ways

' round

'round the chapel of St Michael, every man
 ' carrying his wife behind him, and every
 ' young man his mistress. In short, in every
 ' large country, or in every large district of
 ' a country, there is a tutelar saint entitled to
 ' the attendance of his devotees. Is it not
 ' clear as the light of the sun, that this loss
 ' of time is a great diminution of the gene-
 ' ral industry? that the proprietors, and every
 ' single person on their estates, are sufferers?
 ' and that it is the interest of all to intro-
 ' duce, by every lawful means, a more sim-
 ' ple religion?—As the populace are always
 ' guided by their leaders, it would be thought
 ' that the proprietors, gentlemen, principal
 ' farmers, and others, would cheerfully con-
 ' cur in calm and easy measures for bringing
 ' about a reformation in countries which,
 ' by their uncommercial state and situation,
 ' as having poverty at home, and being
 ' hemmed in betwixt inhospitable seas, and
 ' such extensive muirs and mountains on the
 ' other side, as seclude them from any com-
 ' munication with their more civilized neigh-
 ' bours; and thus continue unenlightened
 ' with the discoveries made in philosophy,
 ' and

‘ and with the other sciences which have the
 ‘ conveniencies and ornaments of life for their
 ‘ object.

“ As the proprietor, chieftain, and gen-
 ‘ tleman, stand, as well as the king, on the
 ‘ shoulders of the husbandman, can it be
 ‘ supposed below the consideration of the
 ‘ former to take into account what part of
 ‘ the substance of the people goes, by way of
 ‘ presents, into the huts of their priests; most
 ‘ of them being mean ignorant birds of pas-
 ‘ sage, having a salary of ten or twelve
 ‘ pounds a-year from the society *pro propa-*
 ‘ *ganda fide* ? what further these itinerant ro-
 ‘ vers draw for purgatory, masses, and pray-
 ‘ ers, as well as the common and unfailing
 ‘ dues for extreme unction ; all taken toge-
 ‘ ther not worth a single farthing, in the eyes
 ‘ of the proprietors themselves, in promoting
 ‘ the temporal or eternal interest of any man
 ‘ or woman alive or dead, though a killing
 ‘ drawback on their present interest, and that
 ‘ of all who are connected with them.

“ May it be considered how unfriendly a
 ‘ mode

‘ mode of religion this is in a poor unimpro-
 ‘ ved country, where a total ignorance pre-
 ‘ vails, which, in humanity, should be remo-
 ‘ ved, especially by those who have the
 ‘ power, and generally the intention, of ta-
 ‘ king up every thing the people can well
 ‘ spare?’

The foregoing account of the sums ex-
 tracted from those poor people by Popish
 priests, is corroborated by another worthy
 clergyman, who, by officiating for a num-
 ber of years in a Popish part of the High-
 lands, had the best opportunity of being in-
 formed of facts.

He informs us, “ That the nominal li-
 ‘ ving of the priest arises from some mortifi-
 ‘ cations under the management of the so-
 ‘ ciety *de propaganda*, and amounts only to
 ‘ about 10 l. a-year, or thereabout, and yet
 ‘ every priest has, in fact, a greater income
 ‘ than any established minister in those coun-
 ‘ tries. Every person, male or female, who
 ‘ is come to the age of confession, and recei-
 ‘ ving the sacrament of penance, is subjected
 ‘ to the payment of one shilling Sterling
 ‘ yearly,

' yearly, which is collected regularly by a
 ' person appointed for that purpose. This,
 ' in a parish consisting of 1000, is 50 l. a-
 ' year, and is more or less according to the
 ' number of persons in the parish. This is
 ' in the supposition that no person pays more
 ' than a shilling: But it is certain that, tho'
 ' the poor and servants pay no more, it
 ' would be reckoned disgraceful for a far-
 ' mer, or gentleman, not to give more. I
 ' have known them give two, three, four,
 ' five shillings, and even exceed that sum.
 ' As to purgatory money, I can, from my
 ' own knowledge, say, that every person,
 ' at his death, mortifies something to de-
 ' liver him out of purgatory. The sum
 ' mortified is in proportion to the person's
 ' circumstances, or to his superstitious preju-
 ' dices. And if it happens that any one
 ' dies without having it in his power to
 ' make such a destination, his friends take
 ' care, out of regard to his soul, to supply
 ' that defect.—Another part of their income
 ' arises from marriages and christenings; the
 ' dues, in these cases, are fixed, and regular-
 ' ly paid.—Another fund is the fines they
 ' impose

‘ impose on delinquents, which are paid to
 ‘ the priests who impose them ; they indeed
 ‘ say that the priest should apply these fines
 ‘ to charitable purposes, but they are not ac-
 ‘ countable to any person for the application
 ‘ of them.”

With these views of Popery, shall we be reckoned intolerant, if we exert ourselves to prevent, by every means becoming the followers of Jesus Christ, the spreading of a superstition productive of such consequences? Our forefathers, who had suffered severely under Popish persecution, were perhaps over zealous in their endeavours to extirpate that religion. The laws enacted were too sanguinary, and we hope they never shall be executed ; but do we not go to an opposite extreme, when under the name of liberal toleration we actually encourage Popery, or, by sitting inactive, afford to the emissaries of the Church of Rome every opportunity of extending their power and influence? Do we not by such a conduct neglect the duty which, as men and as christians, we owe to our God, to our country, and to our fellow-creatures?

To

To promote the Protestant religion in the Highlands and Islands, was one great purpose of the institution of this Society, and is particularly pointed out by their royal patent. The Directors of it have, however, been always averse to any measure which had the appearance of persecution. Though they have received the best information of the residence of trafficking priests, both in the low country, and in many parts of the Highlands of Scotland, and of the various arts tried by them to seduce the weak and ignorant, by which it was in the power of the Society to have procured at least their banishment, yet they have not hitherto offered a complaint against any one of them, or done them the smallest personal injury. Cautious of giving offence, they have not even appeared in any of those associations for the Protestant interest, which it was feared might be the cause of popular insurrection. But, on the other hand, they think they might be charged with betraying their trust, if they were not attentive by all lawful means to support and propagate the religion of their country. If the emissaries of Popery are continually making

ing attacks on us, the most zealous friends of the most unlimited toleration cannot justly blame us for putting on defensive armour. We are rather apprehensive of censure for being too remiss. If we exerted half the zeal in defending ourselves, which the Popish missionaries discover in making proselytes, they would have been less successful.

The schools maintained by the Society in the Highlands have been of great service, not only by affording the most useful instruction to those who, without them, must have remained in a state of absolute ignorance, but in preventing numbers from being seduced by Popish artifices. The Directors have cause to regret that their funds will not allow them to give better salaries to men properly qualified for their more important stations where Popery prevails.— Though the masters appointed have in general sufficient knowledge to teach children to read, and to instruct them in the first principles of religion; yet there are but few of them equal to the task of combating the subtle arguments of the Romish missionaries,

fies, who, however deficient in other branches of literature, are generally trained up to some dexterity in employing these.

Further, though by the schools erected in those sequestered places the young are taught to read, yet this is often of little use to people who want books in the only language which they understand. To remedy in some measure this evil, the New Testament was some years ago translated, and printed at the expence of the society, and several thousands of copies distributed. With the same view, part of the Old Testament is now printing in Gaelic, and a collection is carrying on for defraying the expence of a translation and printing the whole.

But something more is yet necessary.—While the Papists are busy in printing and distributing books, both in the Gaelic and English languages, so artfully calculated to pervert the religious opinions of the people, it appears necessary that some other books should be printed, especially in the Gaelic language, not only to establish them in the principles of Protestantism, but to detect the fallacy

fallacy of the arguments used by the emissaries of the Church of Rome. When we know that a poison is spreading, it is our duty, as far as it is in our power, to prepare an antidote.

Besides the other means employed by the Society for propagating the Protestant reformed religion, it has been proposed to establish small libraries, containing books chiefly on the Popish controversy, and on practical religion, in those places where Popery is most prevalent. In those sequestered parts of the country where missionaries, catechists, and schoolmasters, are appointed, they have no opportunity of procuring the books that are the most necessary for their improvement. It has been suggested that there are many gentlemen who have a number of books on those subjects, which lie useless in their private libraries, which might be of considerable benefit if sent to those places.

The Directors acknowledge with gratitude a donation of a number of volumes, which have already been given them for
that

that purpose ; and if supported, have it in view to execute the plan proposed. They are well informed that the friends of Popery have of late been active in collecting money in Scotland, England, and in foreign parts, to defray the expence of the missionaries, and of printing books to be distributed.

The stated and unavoidable expence of the Society in paying salaries, and a considerable additional expence which has of late been incurred, by furnishing school-books, will not permit them to venture on any extraordinary advance, however necessary it may appear.

On these accounts they solicit the aid of the friends of religion, and of their country, to enable them to carry on their benevolent designs. The real service done to many thousands is not seen ; few visit those remote and almost inaccessible recesses to which their charity is extended ; but if they were better known, there is reason to believe that this Society would be favoured with more general support.

Their

Their capital stock, by the careful management of the Directors, since its first establishment, amounts to a considerable sum, when compared to its small beginnings, and considering that the whole is the contribution of private beneficence. But it is inconsiderable, when compared to that of other societies of a like nature. The society for charity schools in Ireland, besides 2000*l.* per annum granted by his Majesty, and very liberal subscriptions by the noblemen and dignified clergy of the kingdom, has received upwards of 54,000*l.* collected by their corresponding board in London.

The whole annual revenue of the Society in Scotland does not exceed L. 2000, of which there is not above L. 1500 applicable to their great object, the propagation of religion in the Highlands and Islands; yet on this small revenue they now maintain about 180 schools, and educate about 7000 young people. The sum is so disproportioned to the object, that it would be impossible for the Directors to maintain so great a number of schools, were they not strictly attentive to the state of the parishes, and in requiring the inhabitants,

inhabitants, as far as they can afford it, to contribute in part to the support of the schoolmasters, by a small quarterly fee, and especially by furnishing them with a house and school-house, with fuel and a cow's grafs: this is no hardship on them, but it is a material aid to the masters: in a few instances, the gentlemen or noblemen in the neighbourhood pay a part or a half of the salary.

By such frugal management the Directors are enabled to make the charities intrusted to them more generally serviceable than otherwise they could have been. On the whole, they please themselves with the reflection, that there is perhaps no charitable institution so little liable to abuse, or which, on so small a fund, is so really and extensively useful. Its good effects are not thought of by those who live in affluence and ease; therefore they are little attended to; but they are sensibly felt by multitudes, unhappily circumstanced, who have reason to bless the generous hands by whom such benefits are conferred.

A second object of this Society is the propagation of Christianity in foreign parts; our first attention is claimed by our own country, and the proper funds of the Society cannot be applied beyond it. It is natural, however, for a christian of liberal views to extend his compassion to his fellow-creatures living in barbarism and darkness, in whatever part of the earth. No foreign country more readily attracted our attention than the wilds of America, with which we considered ourselves to be connected, and from which we had frequent opportunities of hearing of many thousands whom the sound of the gospel never reached, who are still destitute of the means of knowledge: considerable donations have been made to the Society, which are appointed to be applied solely to this purpose. Their proceedings, relating to missions in America, may be seen at length in their Account, printed in 1774.

For the satisfaction of the Trustees of the late Dr Williams, and of all others concerned, the Society lately transmitted to their corresponding board in London, an account of their proceedings, extracted from their records.

cords. From that account, which is too long to be inserted, it appears that the Society supported their missionaries in America, and transmitted money for that purpose as long as it was lawful for them to do it. None of their four missionaries, Mr Kirkland, Mr Brainard, Mr Butler, and Mr Oaccum, have been regularly dismissed from the service; and the Society are resolved, that if it shall be made appear that all or any of them have faithfully executed their office or offices during the interruption of the communication between the mother country and the colonies, when the communication shall be again opened they will pay their salaries. The accounts of that part of their funds allotted for the support of their missionaries in America, are kept separate, and the money is not applied to any other purpose. If the unhappy differences between Britain and America shall, contrary to their hopes and wishes, continue much longer, the Society have it in contemplation to establish missions among the Indians in the vicinity of the colonies connected with the mother country.

A third object of the Society is the civilizing of the Highlands by encouraging industry and manufactures. Industry is subservient to the interest of religion. When a people are idle or slothful, we can hardly expect that any principles will render them virtuous or useful members of the state. As the Society, by their second patent, are empowered to receive money to be applied for this purpose, considerable sums have been bequeathed solely to this end.

Besides money given to apprentice young men to manufactures, they maintain at present upwards of 20 spinning schools, to which they give, not only a salary to a teaching mistress, but a certain number of wheels and reels; those parts of the country where the schools are established being unable to furnish them.

Though the Directors have the pleasure to think that the affairs of the Society are in a prosperous state, yet they regret that from the narrowness of their funds, they are still obliged to refuse many applications for schools where they appear very necessary.

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They hope, however, that, by the continuance of the public aid, they shall be, in a few years, enabled to render the design of the Society more extensively useful, and no fidelity or attention on their part shall be wanting to promote the desired end.

The Directors thankfully acknowledge the donations received from several very honourable and respectable friends of the Society; in particular they mention the generous contributions made by the honourable members of the Corresponding Board in London; and they flatter themselves that their management of the funds committed to them shall always give satisfaction to the benefactors of the Society.

**The President, Directors, and
Officers of the Society for the
year 1782,**

Earl of Kinnoul, President of the Society.

**Sir John Belsches, Bart. President of the
Committee of Directors.**

*Committee of Directors, arranged according to
the order of admission.*

**Reverend Sir Henry Moncrief, Bart. Mini-
ster of St Cuthberts.**

John Dickson, Esq; Advocate.

Rev. Mr John Kemp } Ministers of

Rev. Mr Thomas Randall } Edinburgh

**Rev. John M'Farlan, D. D. Minister of the
Canongate.**

**Robert Wellwood of Garvock, Esq; Advo-
cate.**

**Mr William M'Donald, Writer to the Sig-
net.**

**Rev. Robert Henry, D. D. one of the Mini-
sters of Edinburgh.**

Mr Alexander Duncan, Writer to the Signet.

Mr John Gardner, Banker in Edinburgh.

Mr John Bonar, Excise-Office, Edinburgh.

Rev.

Rev. Mr Robert Walker, one of the Ministers of Edinburgh.

Rev. Andrew Hunter, D. D. one of the Ministers of Edinburgh, and Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh.

Mr Daniel Millar, Merchant in Edinburgh.

Officers of the Society.

John Davidson, Esq; Writer to the Signet, Treasurer.

Mr William Galloway, Merchant in Edinburgh, Comptroller.

Robert Chalmers, Esq; Accomptant-General of Excise, Accomptant.

Mr David Russell, Accomptant in Edinburgh, Secretary.

Mr James Forrest, Writer to the Signet, Clerk.

Mr Thomas Boyes Writer in Edinburgh, and **Mr Archibald Lundie,** Writer to the Signet, joint Book-holders.

Mr William Gray, Bookseller.

Mungo Watson, Beadle.

Annual and other benefactions are received
by the following persons.

In Edinburgh, by John Davidson, Esq;
Writer to the Signet, Treasurer to the So-
ciety.

In London, by Thomas Coutts, Esq; Ban-
ker in the Strand ;

John M'Intosh, Esq; Stock
Exchange, Secretary to
the Society ;

William Fuller, Esq; and
Son, Bankers, Lombard
street.

Form of a Bequest or Legacy.

Item, I give and bequeath the sum of
to the Society in Scotland for
propagating Christian Knowledge, to be ap-
plied (to the purposes of the first or second
patent, as the donor pleases.)—See both pa-
tents, p. 54. and 59. of the Account of the
Society, published in May 1774.

Those who may be pleased to favour this
Society with bequests or legacies, are intreat-
ed to express their intention in the very
words above directed; and particularly to
take care that the words, *in Scotland*, be not
omitted.



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